Policy on Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Cherokee Public Library strives to provide a warm, welcoming, and safe environment conducive to lifelong learning for patrons of all ages. Sharing this environment with other community members requires that everyone follow the Patron Conduct Policy established by the Library Board of Trustees posted in the library building and on the Library website at [www.cherokee.lib.ia.us](http://www.cherokee.lib.ia.us)

The Library encourages children and vulnerable adults to use its facilities and services. While the Library is concerned for the safety of children and vulnerable adults in and around library facilities, the Library does not act in loco parentis (in place of parents). A parent, legal guardian, teacher, custodian, or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of children or vulnerable adults during their Library visits per the Library’s code of conduct. Library employees have many duties and do not serve as a substitute for daycare or babysitting. Staff do not monitor the arrival or departure of any child or vulnerable adult from a program or the building. The Library is not responsible for any consequences of parents, legal guardians, teachers, custodians, or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities, nor is the library responsible for the actions or safety of minors or vulnerable adults.

The safety of children and vulnerable adults is a priority for the Library. However, the Library is a public building, open to all. Therefore, they may be at risk when they are left unattended.

An unattended child generally is defined as:

* a child under the age of ten (10) who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or caregiver age 18 or older.
* a child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, custodian and who does not know or have the information necessary to contact a parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult.
* a child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or custodian and who is not picked up by closing time and who needs assistance procuring transportation.
* a child under the age of eighteen (18) who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or custodian and who appears to need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services.

A vulnerable adult is an adult who should not be left alone in the Library or is unable to reasonably care for themselves in an emergency situation. This includes adults who are mentally or physically challenged and who need staff help beyond assistance with normal library services and are not under the direct supervision of a parent, legal guardian, caregiver, or custodian. Additionally, an individual is considered a vulnerable adult when they are not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or caregiver when:

* the health or safety of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt.
* the behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult disturbs other Library customers and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the Library.
* an unattended child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or responsible caregiver at closing time.

If a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or caregiver cannot be reached, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child or vulnerable adult.

Parents, legal guardians, custodians, caregivers, children, and vulnerable adults who are in violation of this policy or the Patron Conduct Policy are subject to suspension of library privileges.